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COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME AND COORDINATION
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Agenda item 5

DRAFT REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ITS THIRTY-FIFTH SESSION

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Addendum

COORDINATION QUESTIONS

A. Report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination
and preparations for the Joint Meetings of the
Committee for Programme and Coordination and the
Administrative Committee on Coordination

1. At its 5th and 6th meetings, on 17 May 1995, the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) considered the annual overview report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) for 1994 (E/1995/21) and the report of the twenty-eighth series of Joint Meetings of CPC and ACC, held on 27 October 1994 (E/1995/4).

Discussion

2. Delegations emphasized the importance of CPC as a main organ of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council devoted to coordination matters. They consequently argued that enhanced coordination should lead to a need for fewer resources. Other members questioned whether the Committee had any added value to offer in the role of coordination given the expanded role of the Economic and Social Council. A number of other delegations expressed the view that the objective of coordination should be to improve programme delivery, enhance cooperation and avoid duplication, and any cost savings should only be seen as a by-product of the process. Other members indicated that an enhanced level of coordination should be followed by an increase in resources, as



improved coordination by itself could not meet the growing demands being placed on the system.

3. Many delegations considered the report as a good basis for discussion on coordination within the United Nations system. Some members considered that the report was too descriptive in nature and not critical enough of some of the difficult challenges facing some of the organizations of the system. In the context of its discussion under the item entitled "Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations", a number of members expressed the view that the documentation under the coordination items should have a better focus on the coordination issues of primary concern to CPC.

4. Some members expressed the opinion that the General Assembly should remain the central forum for developing cooperation and coordination. Some members expressed the view that the role of the regional commissions should be strengthened, particularly on issues that called for collaborative actions at the subregional and regional levels. Other members said that the regional commissions must undergo further reforms before additional resources or authority could be devolved to them.

5. With respect to the issue of division of labour and access to resources, some members cited the fact that there was a world-wide trend of reduction of resources at the national level, thereby leaving fewer resources available for the provision of assistance. Other delegations, however, believed that more resources were required to address development issues more effectively.

6. With reference to African economic recovery and development, several members emphasized the need for concrete actions in support of African development. Some members noted the decline in official development assistance (ODA) flows to Africa and the need for the fulfilment of financial commitments and pledges to African countries. Regarding the issue of debt, some members suggested that a comprehensive strategy should be developed. Some members pointed out that the issues of development of human resources and the promotion of agriculture should be assigned high priority within the context of achieving economic recovery and development in Africa.

7. Several members expressed the need for a coordinated follow-up on the implementation of the declarations and conclusions of major conferences such as the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the International Conference on Population and Development and the World Summit for Social Development. They welcomed the initiative of setting up a framework for the follow-up to these conferences and requested information on an outline of such a framework.

8. Some delegations expressed their concern that the contents of paragraph 60, subparagraphs (a), (c) and (e), of the annual overview report (E/1995/21) dealing with the question of human rights might not be based on the Vienna Programme of Action on Human Rights 1/ and might involve conditionality. It was clarified by the Secretariat that these provisions were based on the mandate emanating from the Vienna Conference and did not imply any conditionality.

9. With respect to the preparations for the forthcoming Fourth World Conference on Women, some delegations requested information on the status of the ad hoc inter-agency meeting on women, and inquired about arrangements for regularizing that body. The Secretariat clarified that this matter would be addressed after the Beijing Conference.

10. Several members commended the information contained in the annual overview report (E/1995/21, paras. 71-80) on assistance to countries invoking Article 50 of the Charter of the United Nations. Some delegations expressed the view that the problems of third countries arising from the impact of economic sanctions needed to be covered fully in future overview reports.

11. Several members expressed their concern regarding the delay in the completion of the study by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) of the application of the Noblemaire principle. They stated that ICSC should complete the report as soon as possible. Other members expressed concern about the comments made under the section dealing with the application of the Noblemaire principle and said that they could not endorse them. A number of delegations also welcomed the development of a prototype appraisal system and urged that it be used by all organizations of the system since it would very likely enhance the competitiveness of the staff. Some representatives welcomed the initiative of ACC on the status of women in the secretariats of the United Nations system. They also took note of the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel (General Assembly resolution 49/59).

12. Several members expressed their concern about the financial situation of the organizations of the United Nations system and stated the importance for Member States to fulfil their financial and budgetary commitments in a timely manner. Some delegations requested information on the statement included in paragraph 96 of the annual overview report (E/1995/21), dealing with standards for the harmonization of financial statements.

13. On the need for identification of the theme for the next series of Joint Meetings of CPC and ACC of 1995, several delegations supported the proposal to have a substantive discussion on the means of improving system-wide collaboration in the field of drug control, particularly since the issue was the subject of discussion at the first regular session of ACC of 1995, and would also be discussed in the coordination segment of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in June-July 1995, and therefore provided an opportunity for having a dialogue between CPC and ACC. Other delegations suggested the theme of the eradication of poverty. A few delegations proposed the theme of the role of the United Nations in the development of Africa. One delegation proposed the consideration of the oversight functions within the United Nations system. Some delegations made a number of suggestions to improve the working arrangements for the joint meetings with a view to promoting genuine dialogue among participants, as reflected in the recommendation part of the item entitled "Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations".

Conclusions and recommendations

14. The Committee took note of the annual overview report of ACC (E/1995/21) and the report of the Joint Meetings of CPC and ACC (E/1995/4). While welcoming the emphasis placed by ACC on policy issues pertaining to system-wide coordination and encouraging it to continue its efforts to promote greater coherence in the development work of the system, it stressed the need for the documentation to focus better on coordination issues of primary concern to CPC.

15. The Committee, while recognizing the merits of an approach to coordination that was based on a division of labour among the different organizations and agencies of the United Nations system, emphasized that the General Assembly was the central policy-making forum within the United Nations system. The Committee emphasized that enhanced coordination should lead to greater cost-effectiveness and improved programme delivery.

16. The Committee agreed that the conclusions and declarations of recent major conferences and international events should be followed up in a coordinated manner within the context of an integrated approach, and welcomed the initiatives taken by the Secretary-General and ACC in that regard.

17. The Committee agreed to propose that the theme for the next series of joint meetings of CPC and ACC should be "Coordination of the activities of the United Nations system for the eradication of poverty". The Committee stressed that working arrangements for the joint meetings should be designed to promote a dialogue, and that written statements should be discouraged.

18. The Committee stressed the importance of continued attention of the Secretary-General, including in his capacity as Chairman of ACC, to efforts of assistance to countries invoking Article 50 of the Charter. The Committee requested that the ACC overview report should continue to provide detailed information on assistance by the United Nations system to countries invoking Article 50 of the Charter.

19. The Committee stressed the need for concrete actions in support of African development. It was emphasized that the decline in ODA flows to many African countries should be reversed, and Member States were urged to fulfil their financial commitments and pledges. The Committee further urged that the freeze on the growth of the budgetary expenditures of the United Nations should not affect adversely the development projects for Africa.

20. The Committee urged that the study being undertaken by ICSC of the application of the Noblemaire principle should be completed in time for its consideration by the General Assembly at the earliest opportunity.

21. The Committee stressed that there was an imperative need to place the organizations of the system on a more assured financial basis, and suggested that Member States should recommit themselves to paying their assessments in full, on time and without conditions.

Notes

1/ Report of the World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, 14-25 June 1993 (A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III.
